

Agamben: “Terrorism or Tragicomedy?”

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Terrorism or Tragicomedy?

Giorgio Agamben

On the morning of November 11, 150 police officers, most of which belonged to the anti-terrorist brigades, surrounded a village of 350 inhabitants on the Millevaches plateau, before raiding a farm in order to arrest nine young people (who ran the local grocery store and tried to revive the cultural life of the village). Four days later, these nine people were sent before an anti-terrorist judge and “accused of criminal association with terrorist intentions.” The newspapers reported that the Ministry of the Interior and the Secretary of State “had congratulated local and state police for their diligence.” Everything is in order, or so it would appear. But let’s try to examine the facts a little more closely and grasp the reasons and the results of this “diligence.”

First the reasons: the young people under investigation “were tracked by the police because they belonged to the ultra-left and the anarcho autonomous milieu.” As the Ministry of the Interior specifies, “their discourse is very radical and they have links with foreign groups.” But there is more: certain of the suspects “participate regularly in political demonstrations,” and, for example, “in protests against the Fichier Edvige (Exploitation Documentaire et Valorisation de l’Information Générale) and against the intensification of laws restricting immigration.” So political activism (this is the only possible meaning of linguistic monstrosities such as “anarcho autonomous milieu”) or the active exercise of political freedoms, and employing a radical discourse are therefore sufficient reasons to call in the anti-terrorist division of the police (SDAT) and the central intelligence office of the Interior (DCRI). But anyone possessing a minimum of political conscience could not help sharing the concerns of these young people when faced with the degradations of democracy entailed by the Fichier Edvige, biometrical technologies and the hardening of immigration laws.

As for the results, one might expect that investigators found weapons, explosives and Molotov cocktails on the farm in Millevaches. Far from it. SDAT officers discovered “documents containing detailed information on railway transportation, including exact arrival and departure times of trains.” In plain language: an SNCF train schedule. But they also confiscated “climbing gear.” In simple language: a ladder, such as one might find in any country house.

Now let’s turn our attention to the suspects and, above all, to the presumed head of this terrorist gang, “a 33 year old leader from a well-off Parisian background, living off an allowance from his parents.” This is Julien Coupat, a young philosopher who (with some friends) formerly published *Tiqqun*, a journal whose political analyses – while no doubt debatable – are among the most intelligent of our time. I knew Julien Coupat during that period and I continue, from an intellectual point of view, to hold him in high esteem.

Let’s move on and examine the only concrete fact in this whole story. The suspects’ activities are supposedly *to be connected* with malicious acts against the SNCF that on November 8 caused delays of certain TGV trains on the Paris-Lille line. The devices in question, if we are to believe the declarations of the police and the SNCF agents themselves, can in no way cause harm to people: they can, in the worst case, hinder communications between trains, causing delays. In Italy, trains are often late, but so far no one has dreamed of accusing the national railway of terrorism. It’s a case of minor offences, even if we don’t condone them. On November 13, a police report prudently affirmed that there are perhaps “perpetrators among those in custody, but it is not possible to attribute a criminal act to any one of them.”

The only possible conclusion to this shadowy affair is that those engaged in activism against the (in any case debatable) way social and economic problems are managed today are considered *ipso facto* as potential terrorists, when not even one act can justify this accusation. We must have the courage to say with clarity that today, numerous European countries (in particular France and Italy), have introduced laws and police measures that we would previously have judged barbaric and anti-democratic, and that these are no less extreme than those put into effect in Italy under fascism. One such measure authorizes the detention for ninety-six hours of a group of young – perhaps careless – people, to whom “it is not possible to attribute a criminal act.” Another, equally serious, is the adoption of laws that criminalize association, the formulations of which are left

intentionally vague and that allow the classification of political acts as having terrorist “intentions” or “inclinations,” acts that until now were never in themselves considered terrorist.

The War Against Preterrorism

The War Against Preterrorism: The ‘Tarnac Nine’ and *The Coming Insurrection*

by **Alberto Toscano**

I. The Case*

On 11 November 2008, twenty French youths are arrested simultaneously in Paris, Rouen, and in the small village of Tarnac (located in the district of Corrèze, in France's relatively impoverished Massif Central region). The Tarnac operation involves helicopters, one hundred and fifty balaclava-clad anti-terrorist policemen and studiously prearranged media coverage. The youths are accused of having participated in a number of sabotage attacks against the high-speed TGV train routes, involving the obstruction of the train's power cables with horseshoe-shaped iron bars, causing material damage and a series of delays affecting some 160 trains. Eleven of the suspects are promptly freed. Those who remain in custody are soon termed the 'Tarnac Nine', after the village where a number of them had purchased a small farmhouse, reorganised the local grocery store as a cooperative, and taken up a number of civic activities from the running of a film club to the delivery of food to the elderly. In their parents' words, 'they planted carrots without bosses or leaders. They think that life, intelligence and decisions are more joyous when they are collective'.

Almost immediately, the Minister of the Interior, Michèle Alliot-Marie, brushing aside Republican legal niceties, intervenes to strongly underline the presumption of guilt and to classify the whole affair under the rubric of terrorism, linking it to the supposed rise of an insurrectionist 'ultra-left' (*ultra-gauche*), or 'anarcho-autonomist tendency' (*mouvance anarcho-autonome*), filling in the vacuum left by the collapse of the institutional Left (the PCF). Invoking anti-terrorist legislation, the nine are interrogated and detained for 96 hours; four are subsequently released. The official accusation is that of 'association of wrongdoers in relation to a terrorist undertaking', a charge that can carry up to 20 years in jail; what's more, the accused might be detained for as long as two years before their case goes to trial. On December 2, three more of the Tarnac Nine are released under judiciary control, leaving two in jail, at the time of writing (early January 2009): Julien Coupat and Yldune Lévy.

Giorgio Agamben and Luc Boltanski, among others, write editorials decrying the disproportion and hysteria of this repressive operation. A petition is circulated by Eric Hazan, radical publisher and friend of Coupat, signed by Badiou, Bensaïd, Butler, Rancière, Žižek and several others. In Tarnac (a village proud of its role in the Resistance, and represented by a communist mayor for four decades) a combative committee of support is set up, conveying a virtually unanimous show of solidarity of the villagers with the arrested; other committees and protests emerge in Bruxelles, New York, Moscow, and elsewhere.

In what has been called 'the greatest operation of intoxication of opinion carried out by a [French] government in decades', the attention of the media focuses on Coupat, personally charged with 'directing a terrorist group'. The time-honoured reactionary motif is that of the child of the bourgeoisie who betrays his class and drifts into violent idealism. Some journalists refer to him as the *égaré de l'ESSEC*, after the elite business school where Coupat obtained his first degree. Readers of the press are soon apprised of Coupat's DEA dissertation on Guy Debord at the EHESS, where he worked closely with Luc Boltanski (the latter thanks him in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*), of his involvement in the journal and collective Tiqqun, and of his alleged authorship of the book *L'insurrection qui vient* (The Coming Insurrection) signed by the 'Comité Invisible'. This tract (on which more below) – which Hazan, its publisher at La Fabrique, refuses to ascribe to him – turns out to be one of the main planks in the aspersions and accusations with which Alliot-Marie and various elements of the French state saturate the media. She even avows that the aim of this operation is to send a 'message', dissuading those who might be tempted to take the path of Coupat and his comrades. In rather flagrant contradiction with both the tenor of *L'insurrection* and what may be surmised about the modus operandi of the Tarnac commune, he is painted as the charismatic ring-leader.

As the media feeding frenzy progresses, some of the ideological and investigative background surfaces in the press (the intelligence agency which reports directly to the Ministry of the Interior, the Direction centrale du renseignement intérieur [DCRI], the 'French FBI' which replaced the famous Renseignements généraux [RG] in July 2008, seems rather prone to leaks, managed or otherwise). It appears that Coupat had long been an object of observation by the section of the RG tasked with monitoring the left. One of their reports, which notes Coupat's work in Tiqqun and participation at *Actuel Marx's* third Marx International conference in 1998, in a panel with a number of Bourdieusian sociologists, even describes him as a 'critical metaphysician' – one of several ironic indications in this whole affair of the passing acquaintance of French spooks with the world of

philosophy and political theory. Increasingly, he is tagged as a leading light in an ominous and diffuse political agitation, vaguely designated as ‘anarcho-autonomist’, which eschews the domains of organisation, political representation and regulated conflict for the sake of direct action and irrecuperable opposition to capitalism. Unsurprisingly, for a case steeped – however ‘tragicomically’, to borrow Agamben’s apt adjective – in the new language of security and the ‘war on terror’, the Tarnac affair has a trans-Atlantic component: the FBI had contacted their French counterparts to signal an allegedly illegal crossing from Canada into the US by Coupat and his companion Lévy, and the discovery, in a rucksack left at the border, of a picture of the recruiting office in New York’s Times Square which would later be the object of a small bomb attack, together with written documents from North American anarchists. The broader context of the whole operation is the theorem, dear to Alliot-Marie and the security apparatus of the Sarkozy government, of the mounting threat of an anti-capitalist, anti-statist and anti-systemic radicalization of youth in France and across Europe which cannot be contained in the usual avenues of social conflict. The revealing title of a report on this putative phenomenon by the DCRI is accordingly: ‘From the anti-CPE conflict to the constitution of a pre-terrorist network: Perspectives on the French and European ultra-left’.

The 2006 protests against the law on job contracts for the young (*Contrat de première embauche*), following hard upon the autumn 2005 revolts in the marginalised *banlieues*, played a defining role in the rise to prominence and eventual victory of Sarkozy, whose swaggering, bullying performance as a Minister of the Interior during the riots – when he declared his intention to hose down (*karchériser*) those neighbourhoods and to face down the riotous scum (*racaille*) – became a trademark of sorts. The Sarkozy presidency began under the sign of a deep anxiety, a reactionary rage for order whose other side was the obsessive scrutinizing of the future for signs of social turmoil and radical novelty – in this instance, one might very well agree with the Comité Invisible that ‘governing has never been anything but pushing back by a thousand subterfuges the moment when the crowd will hang you’. Given the political peculiarities of France, this fear of the future (and its masses) took the form of an exorcising of the past – as in Sarkozy’s campaign ultimatum: ‘In this election, we’re going to find out if the heritage of May 68 is going to be perpetuated or if it will be liquidated once and forever’. The compulsive reference to the rebellious past, which is simultaneously imagined as a future – as in Sarkozy’s recent statement to his cabinet, in view of the possible spread of the ‘Greek syndrome’, that ‘We can’t have a May ’68 for Christmas’ – provides the current French administration with its libidinal content, a much needed supplement for its grim vapidity at the level of its programme.

The very notion of ‘preterrorism’ is deeply symptomatic: it makes patent the link between the obsessive identification of ‘dangerous individuals’ and the imagination of future revolts that call for repressive pre-emption. As Boltanski and Claverie have noted, there is an echo of *Minority Report* and its ‘precogs’. The context of the world economic crisis and the not unrelated upsurge of the ‘600 euro generation’ in Greece serve as a backdrop. Indeed, as an anti-terrorist magistrate recently confessed: ‘There is a temptation during a time of crisis to consider any illegal manifestation of political expression to be of a terrorist nature’. Reading the extracts from the RG and DCRI service reports, the radical minded pessimist might be heartened to see such confidence in the possibility of radical revolt being shown by the state and its agencies. Alternatively, she might muse that the logic of immunising oneself against ‘terrorism’ by nipping pre-terrorism in the bud – with all of its hackneyed references to Baader-Meinhof or Action Directe (‘they too started out by writing pamphlets and living in communes...’) – is more likely to accelerate and intensify a process of so-called radicalization, fashioning the state and the legal system into enemies with whom one cannot negotiate. Whatever it may say about the prospects for radical politics and its attendant suppression, this ‘affair’ illustrates the metastasis of a transnational politics of securitisation, which is now being applied to any form of activity that importunes the established order – from hacking to separatism, from anti-war demonstrations to environmental activism. The looseness of anti-terrorism legislation recalls Walter Benjamin’s characterisation of the police in his ‘Critique of Violence’: ‘Its power is formless, like its nowhere-tangible, all-pervasive, ghostly presence in the life of civilized states’ – a situation enhanced by the development of what the parents of the accused pointedly refer to as ‘reality-police’, as one might speak of ‘reality-TV’.

Julien Coupat’s father, Gérard, turned by his son’s ordeal into an eloquent and intransigent advocate for civil liberties, recently put the stakes of this police campaign in stark terms: ‘They are turning my son into a scapegoat for a generation who have started to think for themselves about capitalism and its wrongs and to demonstrate against the government. ... The government is keeping my son in prison because a man of the left with the courage to demonstrate is the last thing they want now, with the economic situation getting worse and

worse. Nothing like this has happened in France since the war. It is very serious'. Like many others, Coupat senior has underscored the ominous prospect of a form of government so politically illiterate and monolithic in its reactions that it cannot distinguish sabotage – a practice that has always accompanied social and workers' movements – from 'terrorism', a term that is indiscriminately albeit deliberately used to cover everything from mass murder to train delays.

II. The Book

What then of the book which – considering the meagre pickings for the police at Tarnac (ladders, train schedules, bolt cutters) – seems to be the centre-piece in the state's inquisitional arsenal: *L'insurrection qui vient?* The legal obscenity of basing arrests on a text – one that moreover cannot be personally imputed to any of the accused – is obvious. The right to practice collective anonymity, against the crude biographism and sociologism of the press, should also be stressed. It is nevertheless of interest to consider the Tarnac affair in light of this combative pamphlet – half inspired dissection of the misery of everyday life in contemporary France, half breviary for a diffuse anarcho-communist defection from capitalist society. It appears that *L'insurrection* was first brought to the attention of the powers that be by the criminologist Alain Bauer who, coming across it on the shelves of the FNAC in 2007, immediately bought up 40 copies and circulated them to various security experts and agencies. A passage from it has been repeatedly referred to as incriminating evidence against Coupat: 'The technical infrastructure of the metropolis is vulnerable: its flows are not merely for the transportation of people and commodities; information and energy circulates by way of wire networks, fibres and channels, which it is possible to attack. To sabotage the social machine with some consequence today means re-conquering and reinventing the means of interrupting its networks. How could a TGV line or an electrical network be rendered useless?' A socialist with some sympathies for the emancipatory and egalitarian potential of railway travel might answer like the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste spokesperson Oliver Besancenot, commenting on the sabotage, that 'we want more trains, not fewer', and end the discussion there. But it is worth considering the diagnosis and prognosis advanced by *L'insurrection*, if only to understand the intellectual backdrop to this call to interrupt the flows.

Were one in the business of the RG and the DCRI, one could argue that a host of themes link *L'insurrection* to Tiqqun pamphlets such *Théorie du Bloom* and *Premiers matériaux pour une théorie de la jeune fille*. A narrative of completed nihilism; a Debordian excoriation of the spectacle (embodied in the 'young girl', the commodity made flesh, and carried by the schizophrenic entrepreneur); the vitriolic polemics against sundry lefts (Trotskyists, Negrians, ecologists...); the view of communism not as a programme but as an ethical disposition and collective experimentation, an attempt to recover an emancipatory notion of community; 'the silent coordination of a sabotage in the grand style' and the very idea of an Invisible Committee (or an Imaginary Party) – all of these betoken a certain political continuity. Yet the differences are also significant. First, stylistically. The works of Tiqqun practiced a kind of second-order situationist *détournement*, keeping Debord while losing much of the Marx and Lukács which the author of *The Society of the Spectacle* had felicitously plundered, and throwing into the mix a generous helping of Agamben – an author who, albeit not so hard to pastiche, does not lend himself all that well to Debordian operations. *L'insurrection* is a more measured and plain-spoken text, whose politics are rooted more in anti-urbanist libertarian anarchism than in the metaphysical auguries carried by Agambenian figures such as the 'young girl' or the 'Bloom' (after Joyce). Though the agenda of *L'insurrection* is still dictated by a situationist-inspired total critique of contemporary society, the lengthy analyses of the ills of everyday metropolitan life in the age of flexitime and the new economy are more in keeping with the recent concerns of critical French sociology than with prophecies about *homo sacer*. Just as a Bourdieusian perspective marks the sections dealing with France's singular relation to the State and the School as structures of subjectivation, so the influence of Boltanski and Chiapello's diagnosis of the dissolution of class solidarity as a foothold for social critique can partly account for the indifference of *L'insurrection* to a Marxist discourse of class struggle, and its delinking of anti-capitalism from class politics.

This is not to say that a certain catastrophism, or better active nihilism, does not pervade this book too, as it did the bulk of Tiqqun's production. *L'insurrection* begins with the lapidary lines: 'From every angle, there's no way out from the present. That's not the least of its virtues'. It too is suffused by the kind of left Jüngerian imagery that can be found in *Théorie du Bloom*. Where the latter declared 'the line is close, but it hasn't been crossed', *L'insurrection* tells us that 'a decision is close'. But as we move through *L'insurrection* it becomes clear that, despite the nod to Agamben in the title, his brand of messianic reversibility – a left interpretation of

the Hölderlinian adage that ‘where danger is, grows the saving power also’ – is overtaken by an anarchist blueprint for the secession from metropolitan capitalism and the reorganisation of everyday life in communes that will serve as bases for a diffuse and ‘horizontal’ overturning of the reigning system of misery. This rejoinder to European Nihilism 2.0 is based neither on waiting for eschatological signs, nor on figures of the reversibility of catastrophe into promise (the young girl, Bloom), nor indeed on the ultra-modernist idea that accelerating moral and material decomposition is the key to a transvaluation of the world. We are also not dealing with a post-workerist exodus immanent to the resources of immaterial labour or cognitive capitalism. Rather, *L’insurrection* advocates a comparatively sober practice of defection and sabotage, which aims to turn the machines of subjection against themselves.

Much of *L’insurrection*’s tableau of modern European (more specifically French, and even more specifically bourgeois Parisian) misery is compelling, especially when it heeds the situationist injunction that to ‘understand what sociology never understands, one need only envisage in terms of aggressivity what for sociology is neutral’. Like the Debord of *In girum*, it can even strike notes of dark comedy: ‘Europe is a penniless continent which secretly shops at Lidl and flies low cost so it can keep on travelling’. At its core lies something like a social-psychological portrait of the micro-managed and multi-tasking subject of contemporary work, the function of which is regarded as fundamentally political: that of ‘biopolitically’ governing the entirety of social life and perpetuating a regime of exploitation that is increasingly superfluous. Though the insight is hardly novel, the Comité Invisible does succeed in pungently capturing the horror and imbecility of the current proliferation of disciplinary devices such as ‘personal development’, ‘human resources’, ‘social capital’ and other managerial monstrosities. *L’insurrection* encapsulates this under the aegis of what it calls the ‘ethics of mobilisation’, the colonisation, through work, of the very domain of possibility: ‘Mobilisation is this slight detachment with regard to oneself ... on the basis of which the Self [*le Moi*] can be taken as an object of work, on the basis of which it becomes possible to *sell oneself*, and not one’s labour-power, to be paid not for what one has done but for what one is. ... This is the new norm of socialisation’. But what lies beyond this salutary vituperation of the modern ideology of work – an ideology which is all the stronger to the extent that it replaces the heroisms and anxieties of the Sartrean project with the soft schizophrenia of a thousand ‘projects’?

It is here that what one may maliciously term the Epicurean tendency in situationism (present for instance, in Debord’s laments for the disappearance of good wine in *Panegyric*) gets the better of *L’insurrection*. ‘Mobilisation’ is not only linked to the capitalist uses of a parallel-processed self, but to a discourse about the metropolis as a space of deadening indifference and mortifying abstraction, and to the idea that the modern city and its masters have perpetrated a kind of assassination of experience: ‘We have been expropriated from our language by teaching, from our songs by variety shows, from our flesh by pornography, from our city by the police, from our friends by the wage system’. Despite the aptness of *L’insurrection*’s denigration of cities turned into posthumous museums and the excoriation of the uses of mobility and isolation for purposes of control – not to mention its call for the marginalisation and ruination of Paris, that ‘frightening concretion of power’ – the hankering for revolutionary authenticity is unpersuasive, and ultimately myopic. Just as the short thrift given to the notion of labour-power leads to a Manichean opposition between a malevolent economy and emancipated ‘forms-of-life’, so there is not much attention paid to the transformative uses of abstraction and alienation. There is more of a hint of Jane Jacobs in the scorn against ‘indifferent’ modern housing and the idea that ‘the multiplication of means of displacement and communication continuously wrenches us away from the *here* and *now*, by the temptation of being everywhere’. What’s more, the notion that the interruption of mobilisation will give rise to practical solidarity as the ‘façade’ of the ‘hyper-vulnerable’ city of flows crumbles, is too romantic to bear scrutiny. Blackouts and blockages can intimate communism but also be the occasion for even more insidious forms of violence and hierarchy (Michael Haneke’s film *Time of the Wolf* is an evocative study in this regard). Likewise, despite the welcome corrective to the idea of the *banlieue* uprisings of 2005 as an instance of criminal mob rule, it is doubtful that actions with ‘no leader, no claim, no organisation, but words, gestures, conspiracies’ may be taken as a model for organised emancipatory politics.

Though one wishes that the anti-urbanism of the Comité Invisible were more dialectical, some of their reflections on the ‘commune’ are worthy of consideration. Not only is renewed debate on the collective experimentation of everyday life to be welcomed, especially by contrast with nebulous figures of messianic transfiguration; *L’insurrection* also raises some important questions for a radical left which conceives of capitalism as an unacceptably destructive system and views crisis-management as an unappetising and doomed

vocation. Rather than an ephemeral image of a glorious tomorrow or a utopian enclave, the commune is envisaged simultaneously as a collective experimentation of politics and as an instrument for a political action which is not merely instrumental but existential, or ethical. Among other things, the emphasis put on the density of real relations – as against the issues of identity and representation that allegedly bedevil parties, groups, collectives and milieus – gives a concrete political meaning to friendship, over against the obsession, whether prudish or prurient, with the commune as the site of sexual exchange. Another classic motif, that of self-reliance, is given a contemporary twist: the commune is presented as a way of gaining and practicing the kind of know-how (medical, agricultural, technical) that can allow one to no longer depend on the metropolis and its forms of ‘security’. In other words, to ready oneself for *real* crisis, as communistic survivalism prepares for capitalist apocalypse.

One cannot gainsay the force and interest of concrete utopias, however minimal or marginal, nor deny the all too familiar truth – once again laid bare by this case – that the modern capitalist nation-state does not suffer alternatives gladly. The young activists and intellectuals at Tarnac, in this regard echoing if not necessarily following *L’insurrection qui vient*, have certainly showed that even very simple experiments with egalitarianism and emancipation can sow real political relations and solidarities. But, especially at a moment when the political question of the *public* is so crucial – whether we are speaking of universities, hospitals, banks, or indeed trains – the alternative between the commune and the metropolis is a false one, as is, to borrow another dichotomy from *L’insurrection*, the one between hegemony and horizontality. To appropriate authenticity is not enough. Any truly transformative politics must surely appropriate distraction, mobility and indeed, alienation and indifference too. Trains, like sewage systems, dams, airports and hospitals, are not to be repudiated, interrupted or merely abandoned to the whims of the capitalist state. Perhaps one day, rather than shuttling us from human resources conferences to personal development seminars, they may be put to more creative and revolutionary uses, like the Russian Kino trains of the 1920s.

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* A slightly abridged version of this text will appear in *Radical Philosophy* 154. I thank the editorial collective of *RP* for permission to republish the text here.

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Tiqqun, *Théorie du bloom* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2000), p. 134.

I owe this point to Julien Vincent.

L'insurrection qui vient, p. 7.

Théorie du Bloom, p. 130; *L'insurrection qui vient*, p. 12.

I owe these notions of reversibility and accelerationism to Benjamin Noys.

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Endemic hardcore pornography seems to have put sex beyond a threshold of political indifference for the author (s) of *L'insurrection*.

Who are the Terrorists?

“Who are the Terrorists?”

by Alain Badiou and Eric Hazan

from [Politis](#) 1032-1033, December 24 2008

“Individual or collective enterprise intended to severely disturb law and public order by intimidation or terror”: this is the definition of terrorism in the penal code. Such an enterprise, concerted and of great scale, has been running before our eyes for months. As regards intimidation, the means are numerous and varied: faces are controlled on the streets, menacing patrols of transit cops with their guard dogs, police cordons around the *banlieue*, surveillance from the sky by night-vision military devices. Not to mention the intimidation of journalists, threatened with losing their jobs by a simple telephone call from above.

As regards terror, the recent outbreak by special overarmed police forces wearing balaclavas at dawn in a small village in Corrèze was filmed. Photos were also taken so that the whole country could imagine the kids’ dreadful experience when those aliens suddenly appeared. We remember the death of Chulan Zhang Liu, the little Chinese girl who killed herself jumping out of the window last year because she was terrified by the police hunt for illegal immigrants. We remember the teenagers who pushed their insubordination to the point where they hung themselves in their prison cells. We remember the little girls from Marciac school terrorised by sniffer dogs. Not to mention the terror endured by mentally ill people who populate prisons and public benches in sub-zero temperatures, to whom the president promised techno-drugged measures appropriate to the menace they represent.

The fight against terrorism along with its younger sisters, namely the fight against illegal immigration and the fight against drugs, has got nothing to do with what they claim fighting against. They are method of governance, of controlling the population by intimidation and terror. Those who hold the state in their hands are conscious of the unprecedented unpopularity of their so-called reforms. They know that a single spark can set the whole forrest on fire. They put in place a terrorist system to prevent and treat the dangerous unrest they anticipate. The recent events in Greece are reinforcing their fears, of which one can think that they are relatively justifiable. For, as clause 35 in the Constitution of 1793 states: “when the government violates the people’s rights, insurrection is for the people and for each section of the people, the most sacred right and the most essential duty.”

Interview with Julien Coupat

[LeMonde](#) | 5.25.09 – Here are the responses to the questions that we [Isabelle Mandraud and Caroline Monnot] posed in writing to Julien Coupat. Placed under investigation on 15 November 2008 for “terrorism,” along with eight other people interrogated in Tarnac (Correze) and Paris, he is suspected of having sabotaged the suspended electrical cables of the SNCF. He is the last one still incarcerated. (He has asked that certain words be in italics.)

Q. How are you spending your time?

A. Very well, thank you. Chin-ups, jogging and reading.

Q. Can you recall the circumstances of your arrest for us?

A. A gang of youths, hooded and armed to the teeth, broke into our house. They threatened us, handcuffed us, and took us away, after having broken everything to pieces. They first took us into very fast cars capable of moving at more than 170 kilometers an hour on the highways. In their conversations, the name of a certain Mr Marion (former leader of the anti-terrorist police) came up often. His virile exploits amused them very much, such as the time he slapped one of his colleagues in the face, in good spirits and at a going-away party. They sequestered us for four days in one of their “people’s prisons,” where they stunned us with questions in which absurdity competed with obscenity.

The one who seemed to be the brains of the operation vaguely excused himself from this circus by explaining that it was the fault of the “services,” the higher-ups, all kinds of people who want [to talk to] us very much. Today, my kidnappers are still free. Certain recent and diverse facts attest to the fact that they continue to rage with total impunity.

Q. The sabotage of the SNCF cables in France was claimed [by someone] in Germany. What do you say about that?

A. At the moment of our arrest, the French police were already in possession of the communique that claimed, in addition to the acts of sabotage that they want to attribute to us, other simultaneous attacks in Germany. This communique is inconvenient to the police for a number of reasons: it was mailed from Hanover, drafted in German and sent to newspapers in the Outer Rhine area exclusively; but it is especially inconvenient because it does not fit the framework of the mediatic[1] fable about us: a small nucleus of fanatics bringing the battle to the heart of the State by hanging three iron bars on the cables. From then on, they took care to not mention this communique too much, either in court or in the public lie.

It is true that the sabotage of the train lines lost much of its mysterious aura as a result: now it would be a matter of simple protest against the transportation of ultra-radioactive nuclear wastes to Germany over railroads and denunciations (made in passing) of the great rip-off known as “the crisis.” The communique concludes with a very SNCF-like “We thank the travelers on the trains concerned for their understanding.” What tact there is among these “terrorists”!

Q. Do you recognize yourself in the phrases “anarcho-autonomous circle of influence” and “ultra-left”?

A. Let me resume what I was saying. In France, we are currently living through the end of a period of historical freezing, the founding act of which was the accord reached in 1945 by the Gaullists and the Stalinists to disarm the people under the pretext of “avoiding a civil war.” The terms of this pact can be formulated thus: while the Right will renounce its overtly fascist accents, the Left will abandon all serious revolutionary perspectives. For four years, the advantage of Sarkozy’s clique has been the fact that it unilaterally took the initiative by breaking this pact and renewing “without apologies” the classics of pure reaction concerning the insane, religion, the West, Africa, work, the history of France and national identity.

Faced with a power at war that dares to think strategically and divide the world into “friends,” “enemies” and

“negligible quantities,” the Left remains frozen, as if sick with tetanus. It is too cowardly, too compromised and, more than anything else, too discredited to offer the least resistance to a power that it doesn’t dare treat as an enemy and that, one by one, snatches away the sly devils [les malins] among its ranks. As for the extreme Left (Besancenot, for example): whatever its electoral results, and even if it has emerged from the groupuscular state in which it long vegetated, it hasn’t a more desirable perspective to offer than Soviet gray that has been slightly retouched in Photoshop. Its destiny is to deceive and disappoint.

Thus, in the sphere of political representation, the established power has nothing to fear from anyone. And certainly not the union bureaucracies, which are more corrupt than ever and now importune power [for help]. They do this, they who have danced an obscene ballet with the government for the last two years! In such conditions, the only force that can put a check on the Sarkozy gang, its only real enemy in this country, is the street, the street and its old revolutionary penchants. During the riots that followed the second part of the ritualized plebiscite of May 2007, only the street knew how to rise to the occasion. In the Antilles, during the recent occupations of companies and factories, it alone knew how to make another voice heard.

This summary analysis of the theater of operations was soon to be confirmed in June 2007, when the intelligence agencies published — under the bylines of journalists working under orders (notably for *Le Monde*) — the first articles bringing to light the terrible peril that is placed upon all social life by the “anarcho-autonomes.” To start, one attributed to them the organization of spontaneous riots, which, in so many towns, saluted the “electoral triumph” of the new president.

With this fable of “anarcho-autonomes,” one has sketched out the profile of the menace to which the Minister of the Interior is docilely committed to give a little flesh and a few faces by organizing targeted arrests in mediatic police raids. When one can no longer contain what overflows, one can still assign it a case number and incarcerate it. Thus, the case of the “rioter,” in which the workers of Clairoux, urban youths, student blockaders and anti-summit demonstrators are dumped pell-mell — this is certainly an effective move in the current management of social pacification — permits the State to criminalize actions, not existences.[2] And it is indeed the intention of the new power to attack the enemy, as such, without waiting for him to declare himself. Such is the vocation of the new categories of repression.

Finally, it hardly matters that no one in France recognizes him or herself as “anarcho-autonomous” or that the ultra-left is a political current that had its moment of glory in the 1920s and that, subsequently, never produced anything other than inoffensive volumes of Marxology. Moreover, the recent fortunes of the term “ultra-left,” which have permitted some journalists to catalogue the Greek rioters of last December without striking a blow, speak to the fact that no one knows what the ultra-left was nor even that it ever existed.

At this point — and in the anticipation of outbursts that can only be systematized in the face of the provocations of a hard-pressed global and French oligarchy — the utility of these categories to the police must no longer be debated. Nevertheless, one cannot predict whether “anarcho-autonomous” or “ultra-left” will finally carry off the favors of the Spectacle and relegate a totally justified revolt to the inexplicable.

Q. The police consider you the leader of a group on the point of tipping over into terrorism. What do you think about that?

A. Such a pathetic allegation can only be the work of a regime that is on the point of tipping over into nothingness.

Q. What does the word terrorism mean to you?

A. Nothing allows one to explain why the Algerian Department of Intelligence and Security, suspected of having orchestrated — with the knowledge of the DST[3] — the wave of attacks in 1995, is not classed among the international terrorist organizations. Nothing allows one to explain the sudden transformation of “terrorists” into heroes in the manner of the Liberation, into partners suitable for the Evian Accords, into Iraqi police officers and “moderate members of the Taliban,” according to the most recent sudden reversal of the American strategic doctrine.

[It means] nothing, if not sovereignty. It is the sovereign in this world who designates the terrorist. He who refuses to take part in this sovereignty will take care not to respond to your question. He who covets a few

crumbs will comply [with the question] promptly. He who doesn't suffocate from bad faith will find instructive the case of the two ex-"terrorists" who became the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of the Palestinian Authority, respectively, and who — to top it all off — were both given Noble Peace Prizes.

The fuzziness that surrounds the designation "terrorist," the manifest impossibility of defining "terrorism," does not affect several provisional lacunae in French law: terrorists are at the source of this thing that one can define very easily: anti-terrorism, for which "terrorism" forms the pre-condition. Anti-terrorism is a technique of government that thrusts its roots down into the old art of counter-insurrection, so-called "psychological warfare," to be polite.

Anti-terrorism, contrary to what the term itself insinuates, is not a means of fighting against terrorism, but is the method by which one positively produces the political enemy as terrorist. By means of a wealth of provocations, infiltrations, surveillance, intimidation and propaganda; by means of the science of mediatic manipulation, "psychological action," the fabrication of both evidence and crimes; by means of the fusion of the police and the judicial; and by means of the annihilation of the "subversive menace" by associating the internal enemy, the political enemy — which is at the heart of the population — with the affect of terror.

In modern warfare, the essential aspect is the "battle for hearts and minds" in which blows are permitted. The elementary procedure here is invariable: individualize the enemy so as to cut him off from the people and from communal reason; display him in the costume of a monster; defame him, publicly humiliate him, incite the vilest people to heap their spit upon him; encourage hatred of him. "The law must be utilized simply as another weapon in the arsenal of the government and, in this case, represents nothing other than a propaganda cover to get rid of undesirable members of the public. For maximum efficiency, it would be suitable that the activities of the judicial services are tied to the war effort in the most discrete fashion possible," advised Brigadier Frank Kitson (former general in the British Army, theoretician of counter-insurrectionary war), who knew something of the subject.

Once is not a pattern: in our case, anti-terrorism has been a flop. In France, one isn't ready to let oneself be terrorized by us. The prolongation of my detention for a "reasonable" period of time is petty revenge, quite comprehensible due to the means mobilized and the depth of the failure; as comprehensible as the petty fury of the [intelligence] "services," which since 11 November [2008] have through the press attributed to us the most fantastic misdeeds and stalked our comrades. How this logic of reprisals has seized control of the minds of the police and the small hearts of the judges, this is what the cadenced arrests of those "close to Julien Coupat" will have had the merit of revealing.

It is necessary to say that certain people are using this affair to extend their lamentable careers, like Alain Bauer (a criminologist), for example; others are using it to launch their latest ventures, like poor M. Squarcini (the Central Director of Domestic Intelligence); while still others are trying to rehabilitate the credibility that they've never had and never will have, like Michele Alliot-Marie.[4]

Q. You come from a very well-to-do background, which oriented you in another direction. . .

A. "There are plebes in all classes." (Hegel).

Q. Why Tarnac?

A. Go there, you will understand. If you don't, no one could explain it to you, I fear.

Q. Do you define yourself as an intellectual? A philosopher?

A. Philosophy was born like chatty grief from original wisdom. Plato already heard the words of Heraclitus as if they had escaped from a bygone world. In the era of diffused intellectuality, one can't see what "the intellectual" might make specific, unless it is the expanse of the gap that separates the faculty of thinking from the aptitude for living. Intellectual and philosopher are, in truth, sad titles. But for whom exactly is it necessary to define oneself?

Q. Are you the author of *The Coming Insurrection*?

A. This is the most formidable aspect of these proceedings: a book integrally versed in the case histories of

instructional manuals, in the interrogations in which one tries to make you say that you live just as described in *The Coming Insurrection*; that you protest^[5] as *The Coming Insurrection* advocates; and that you sabotaged train lines to commemorate the Bolshevik coup d'Etat of October 1917. Because this idea is mentioned in *The Coming Insurrection*, its publisher was questioned by the anti-terrorist services.

In French memory, one hasn't seen power become fearful of a book for a very long time. Instead, one had the custom of believing that as long as leftists were preoccupied with writing, at least they weren't making revolution. Assuredly, times change. Serious history returns.

What founds the accusation of terrorism where we are concerned are suspicions about the coincidence of thought and life; what founds the accusation concerning the association of evil-doers is the suspicion that this coincidence couldn't have been the result of individual heroism, but communal attention. Negatively, this means that one does not suspect any of those who sign their names to so many fierce critiques of the system of putting the least of their firm resolutions into practice; the insult is strong enough. Unfortunately, I am not the author of *The Coming Insurrection*, and this whole affair will end up convincing us of the essentially repressive [policiere] character of the author's function.

On the other hand, I am a reader. Re-reading it, just last week, I better understood the hysterical bad temper that, from high up, motivates the State to hound its presumed authors. The scandal of the book is that all that figures in it is rigorously, catastrophically true and it does not cease to prove itself true, little by little, each day. Because what proves itself, under the outward appearance of this "economic crisis," this "collapse of confidence," and this "massive rejection of the ruling classes," is indeed the end of a civilization, the implosion of a paradigm, namely, that of the government, which rules everything in the West — the relations of beings to themselves no less than to the political order, religion or the organization of business. At all levels of the present, there is a gigantic loss of mastery that no word-games [maraboutage] by the police will be able to remedy.

It is not by skewering us with prison terms, microscopic surveillance, judicial supervision and prohibitions upon communication because we might be the authors of these lucid findings that one will make what has been found disappear. The characteristic of truth is that it escapes, barely enunciated, from those who formulate it. Governments: it doesn't accomplish anything if you send us to jail; quite the contrary.

Q. You've read *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault. Does this analysis still seem pertinent to you

A. The prison is indeed the dirty little secret of French society, the key to and not the margins of the most respectable social relations. What is concentrated in the prison is not a pile of wild barbarians, as it pleases some people to think, but in fact the ensemble of the disciplines that weave together so-called "normal" existence outside. Supervisors, the canteen, soccer games in the courtyard, one's use of time, divisions, camaraderie, fights and ugly architecture: one has to have been in prison to take the full measure of the carceral in the school, the "innocent" schools of the Republic.

Envisioned from this impregnable angle, prison isn't a pit [repaire] for society's failures; instead, current society is a failed prison. The same organization of separations, the same administration of misery through shit, [6] TV, sports and porno reigns everywhere else, but much less methodically than in prison. To conclude: these high walls only hide from view this truth of explosive banality: there are lives and souls, entirely equal, who drag themselves along on both sides of the barbed wire, and because of it.

If one avidly tracks down the testimonies "from the inside" that finally expose the secrets that the prison conceals, it is done to better to hide the secret that the prison is: the secret of your servitude, you who are reputedly free, while its menace weighs invisibly on each of your gestures.

All of the virtuous indignation that surrounds the black hole [la noirceur] of French prisons and their suicide rates; all the crude counter-propaganda of the penal administrators who bring on camera the disciplinarians [des matons] devoted to the well-being of the detainees and the metal-plated directors who are concerned with the "meaning of the penalty"; in sum, all of the debate on the horror of incarceration and the necessity of humanizing detention is as old as the prison system itself. It is part of its efficacy, which permits the State to combine the terror that the prison must inspire with the hypocritical legal status of "civilized" punishment. The little system of prison-based spying, humiliation and violence [de ravage] that the French State uses more

fanatically than any other State in Europe isn't even scandalous. The State pays for it a hundred times over in the banlieus, and this, from all the evidence, is only a beginning: vengeance is the hygiene of the plebes.

But the most remarkable imposture of the judicial-penal system certainly consists in pretending that it exists to punish criminals when, in fact, it only manages illegality. Any boss — not just the boss of Everything — any president of a general council — not just the President of Hauts-de-Sein — any cop knows that illegality is necessary for the correct performance of his or her trade. In our time, the chaos of the laws is such that one would do well to not seek to make the laws respected too much and the drug enforcements agents [les stupes] should stick to regulating trafficking and not repressing it, which would be social and political suicide.

The discussion is not — as the judicial fiction would have it — between the legal and the illegal, between the innocents and the criminals, but between the criminal whom one judges suitable for prosecution and the criminal whom one leaves in peace, as the general powers of society require. The race of the innocents was wiped out long ago, and the penalty is not what condemns you to justice: the penalty is justice itself; thus, it isn't a matter of my comrades and I "claiming our innocence," despite what is ritualistically repeated in the press, but trying to derail the hazardous political offensive that these vile proceedings constitute. These were some of the conclusions to which the mind is brought by re-reading *Surveiller et Punir* in prison. Of course, one isn't suggesting, given what the Foucaultians have done with the works of Foucault for the last twenty years, that they should spend some time in jail.

Q. How do you analyze what has happened to you?

A. Enlighten yourself: what has happened to us, to my comrades and I, will also happen to you. This is the first mystification by power: nine people are prosecuted in the framework of a judicial proceeding against an "association of evil-doers in connection with a terrorist enterprise," and they must be particularly concerned by these grave accusations. But there is no "Tarnac Affair," no "Coupat Affair," no "Hazan Affair" (Hazan published "The Coming Insurrection"). What there is, is an oligarchy that is very wobbly and becomes ferocious like any power when it feels itself to be really threatened. When his views no longer elicit anything among the people other than hatred and scorn, the prince has no other support than the fear that he inspires.

What there is before us is a bifurcation that is both historical and metaphysical: either we pass from a paradigm of government to a paradigm of living, at the price of a cruel but deeply moving revolt, or we allow the instauration at the planetary level of an air-conditioned disaster in which — under the yoke of a "simplified" management — an imperial elite of citizens and marginalized plebeian classes coexist. Thus there surely is a war, a war between the beneficiaries of the catastrophe and those who are accustomed to a less skeletal idea of life. One has never seen a dominant class commit suicide willingly.

The revolt has conditions, but not causes. How many Ministries of National Identity, lay-offs, raids of those without proper papers or those who are political opponents, young people beaten up by the police in the banlieus, and ministers threatening to deprive diplomas from those who dare to occupy their schools are necessary before one decides that such a regime — even if installed in power by an apparently democratic plebiscite — has no reason to exist and only merits being brought down? It is a matter of sensitivity.

Servitude is the intolerable thing that can be tolerated indefinitely. Because this is a matter of sensitivity and this sensitivity is immediately political — not that it wonders "Who should I vote for?" but "Is this incompatible with my existence?" — it is, for power, a question of anesthetizing the response [to the second question] through the administration of ever more massively distracting doses of fear and stupidity. And there where the anesthesia no longer works, this order, which has united against it all the reasons for revolt, tries to dissuade us by stuffing us into a small, tight-fitting [ajustee] terror.

My comrades and I are only a variable in this adjustment. One suspects us like so many others, so many "youths," so many "gangs," of having no solidarity with a world that is collapsing. On this one point, one doesn't lie. Fortunately, this heap of swindlers, impostors, industrialists, financiers and prostitutes; this entire Mazarin's court full of neuroleptics, Disney versions of Louis Napoleon, and Sunday shows that grip the country for an hour lack an elementary sense of dialectics. Each step that they take towards total control brings them closer to their fear. Each new "victory" with which they flatter themselves spreads a little further the desire to see them defeated in their turn. Each maneuver that they figure comforts their power ends up rendering it

detestable. In other words: the situation is excellent. This isn't the moment to lose courage.

(Published in Le Monde on 25 May 2009 and translated by NOT BORED! 27 May 2009.)

[1] There is no adequate English equivalent for *mediatique*, which not only refers to the media, but to the spectacular, as well.

[2] There could be typos in or words left out of the original French. The context suggests that the case of the “casseur” allows the State to criminalize existences and actions.

[3] The French FBI.

[4] Minister of the Interior.

[5] *vous manifeste* can also mean “demonstrate” and “reveal yourself.”

[6] English in original.

NYTimes: “Liberating Lipsticks and Lattes”

Liberating Lipsticks and Lattes

By [COLIN MOYNIHAN](#).

They arrived at the Barnes & Noble at Union Square in small groups on Sunday afternoon, proceeding two and three at a time to the fourth floor, where they browsed among shelves holding books by authors like Jacques Derrida and Martin Heidegger.

By 5 o'clock a crowd of more than 100 had gathered. Their purpose: to celebrate the publication of an English translation of a book called "The Coming Insurrection," which was written two years ago by an anonymous group of French authors who call themselves the Invisible Committee. More recently, the volume has been at the center of an unusual criminal investigation in France that has become something of a cause célèbre among leftists and civil libertarians.

The book, which predicts the imminent collapse of capitalist culture, was inspired by disruptive demonstrations that took place over the last few years in France and Greece. It was influenced stylistically by Guy Debord, a French writer and filmmaker who was a leader of the Situationist International, a group of intellectuals and artists who encouraged the Paris protests of 1968.

In keeping with the anarchistic spirit of the text, the bookstore event was organized without the knowledge or permission of Barnes & Noble. The gathering was intended partly as a show of solidarity with nine young people — including one suspected of writing "The Coming Insurrection" — whom in November the French police accused of forming a dangerous "ultraleftist" group and sabotaging train lines.

As a bookstore employee announced to the milling crowd that there was no reading scheduled for that night, a man jumped onto a stage and began loudly reciting the opening words of the book's recent introduction: "Everyone agrees. It's about to explode."

A security guard tried to halt the unsanctioned reading, but the man continued for about five minutes, until the police arrived. The crowd, mostly people in their 20s and 30s, including some graduate students, then adjourned, clapping and yelling, to East 17th Street. There they formed a rebellious spectacle, crowding into shops and loudly shouting bits of political theory, to the amusement of some onlookers and store employees and the irritation of others.

When the French publisher La Fabrique first issued "The Coming Insurrection" in 2007, it received comparatively little attention. But among those who did take notice were the French police, who began monitoring a group of people, mostly graduate students, living in the tiny mountain village of Tarnac in central France.

Last November nine of those men and women, ages 22 to 34, were arrested and accused of "associating with a terrorist enterprise" and disabling power lines that left 40,000 passengers stranded for several hours on high-speed trains. A spokeswoman for the Paris prosecutors' office said that one of the nine, Julien Coupat, was believed to have written "The Coming Insurrection." He has denied being the author but told interviewers in France that he admired the book.

The government eventually released the group — who have come to be known as the Tarnac Nine — pending further investigation, with some opponents of the official action accusing the police of carrying out arrests without sufficient evidence.

Meanwhile, the book Mr. Coupat was accused of writing has developed a small but devoted following. Dozens of anonymous translators have posted the text on Web sites. And Semiotext(e), a Los Angeles publisher that specializes in works by French theorists like Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault, published an English-language edition of the book at the end of last month with a print run of 3,000.

Hedi El Kholti, an editor at Semiotext(e), said that the book's winding up as a key part of a controversial case added to the historical value of its message.

"Everyone is dancing around this notion that publishing a book can take you to jail," he said recently by

telephone. “That a book is an element that can involve you in a trial.”

The slender text is part antimaterialist manifesto and part manual for revolution. The writers expound at length on what they see as a diseased and dehumanizing civilization that cannot be reformed but must, they contend, be torn apart and replaced. To that end the authors direct their readers to sabotage authority, form self-sufficient communes and learn how to “support a conspiracy against commodity society.”

Like the authors of “The Coming Insurrection,” most of those observing its publication on Sunday night refused to identify themselves by name.

“The book is important because it speaks to the total bankruptcy of pretty much everything,” one man said after the group left the bookstore. “We’re living in a high-end aesthetic with zero content.”

Inside the Sephora cosmetics shop on East 17th Street, the crowd chanted, “All power to the communes,” as security guards wearing black T-shirts ordered them back outside. A few minutes later the cry was taken up again as the group marched into Starbucks on Union Square West.

Emile Olea, 28, a customer at the coffee shop who was visiting from San Diego, closed his laptop computer and gazed at the crowd.

“I have no idea what’s going on,” he said. “But I like the excitement.”

FOX NEWS: Extreme Left Calling People to Arms

Video here: [*The Coming Insurrection on FOX NEWS*](#)

While the government warns that right-wing extremists could be domestic terrorists, and The New York Times, says I could incite those crazy conservatives to violence, the extreme left is actively calling for violence!

As world economies go down the tank and unemployment continues to rise, disenfranchised people are set to explode.

The dangerous leftist book that could spark this is “The Coming Insurrection.” This is a call to arms for violent revolution, authored anonymously by a French group called the Invisible Committee who want to bring down capitalism.

This started in France and spread to countries like Greece and Iceland, where people are out of work, out of money and out of patience.

Now it’s coming here. The book comes out in English in the U.S. in August. I have one of the first English copies.

The book was written after riots in the Paris suburbs in 2005 tore the country apart, and that was before the economy really got bad. This is the anti-”Common Sense,” where I call for peaceful protest.

This is a book of revolution. Remember this is not from the right, you know the radicals that everyone is so worried about in government. This is from the far left. Let me share a bit:

“Take up arms. Do everything possible to make their use unnecessary. There is no such thing as a peaceful insurrection. Weapons are necessary.”

The French government was so freaked out they arrested nine people believed to have written “The Coming Insurrection” on charges of “criminal association for the purposes of terrorist activity” for allegedly sabotaging train lines in France.

When I first heard of this book it was in The New York Times book section. A group had organized an unauthorized reading of “The Coming Insurrection” at a New York City bookstore. When they were shoed out of the store they went to Starbucks and so on. Not exactly terrorist activity; more of a curiosity.

But it gets a little more creepy when you look at this: One of those leaders arrested in France Julien Coupat was held for six months and just released this May. According to a story in The Globe and Mail back in January of 2008 while visiting Canada, Coupat and his girlfriend sneaked over the border to visit New York City. According to relatives, they didn’t want their photos and fingerprints in the hands of U.S. authorities. Why is that? (By the way are our borders protected yet?)

Remember the media will tell you the right is the one to be feared. They do everything they can to tie any random nutjob shooting to conservatives. “The shooter was a fan of ’24’ — ’24’ starred Jon Voight — Jon Voight is a conservative!”

But this is a call for violence. Here is more:

“It’s a question of knowing how to fight, to pick locks, to set broken bones and treat sicknesses; how to build a pirate radio transmitter; how to set up street kitchens; how to aim straight.”

The synopsis of the book describes it as “an eloquent call to arms arising from the recent waves of social contestation in France and Europe... a strategic prescription for an emergent war-machine to spread anarchy and live communism.”

A few years ago I said that Europe is on the brink of destruction. This is yet another sign that it’s coming. Even in Japan where protests have been seen as taboo since the 1960s, young people angered over the economy and fear for their future — taking to the streets, beginning to unionize. The communist party of Japan says they are getting 1,000 new members a month.

This book has not even been released in this country yet. It has been passed hand to hand and via the Internet, much like the pamphleteers in pre-revolution America. Thomas Paine was one of them. He issued a call to arms. I am not doing that. You are an idiot if you start shooting people — all that does is delegitimize the cause. Be like Ghandi, like Martin Luther King.

But people on the extreme left are calling people to arms. I am not calling to ban this book, but you should read it to know what is coming and be ready when it does.

Glenn Beck on FOX News Channel